

CORRESPONDENCE

We are in receipt of the following letter and article from Dr. Philip King Brown, President of the California Tuberculosis Association:

Editor of the State Journal of Medicine, Butler Building, San Francisco.

Dear Doctor:

The enclosed circular, if published in our Journal, will enable doctors to handle some of the worthy cases of tuberculosis among school teachers who might not otherwise be able to afford sanatorium care. I would appreciate it very much if the Journal would publish this notice.

Very truly yours,

PHILIP KING BROWN.

Fresno, Calif., November 10, 1921.

Dear Teacher:

Some years ago the late Mr. Bancroft E. Beeman of Los Angeles left a bequest to the California Tuberculosis Association, the fund to be used for whatever need seemed greatest to the Executive Committee. The fund has not been touched for the reason that we wished to use it where it would do the greatest good.

For some years past there has come to the Association's notice from time to time, teachers who were suffering with pulmonary tuberculosis. In some instances the inquiry has come for advice and information, but in many other instances it has been an appeal for help. Realizing the very poor remuneration paid to teachers, coupled with the fact that frequently they have obligations to meet that makes it impossible for them to stop work when their chances for recovery are good, many of them have been obliged to teach until they have become advanced cases. For this reason the Executive Committee has decided to use the Beeman bequest for a building for teachers at the Barlow Sanatorium in Los Angeles. Dr. Barlow is one of the foremost tuberculosis specialists in the United States, and it is for this reason that his institution was chosen. The above picture is a facsimile of the building. There will be private sleeping porches and dressing-rooms.

Until an endowment can be secured for the beds the building will be supported from the proceeds of the Christmas Seal sale. We hope that the teachers in the State who may need care will feel that this building is dedicated to them for their recovery from tuberculosis.

Very sincerely,

THE CALIFORNIA TUBERCULOSIS ASSOCIATION.

Taxing the Physician

"In ancient times a barbarous people presented a peculiar way of getting rid of their sins, by the priest laying hands on a goat, which was sent into the wilderness—the scapegoat. This didn't hurt the goat or do the people any good, except those who were Christian Scientist in embryo. Since that far-off time various peoples, institutions, societies and persons have been made scapegoats. At the present time there is one society specially under ban, though it has not taken to the woods.

The medical profession is the goat, but it cannot escape. There are men and women in this profession who violate laws and bring opprobrium upon all its members; there are statute laws against such offenses enacted for the public good, which should be enforced by the public legal machinery,

but in this regard the medical profession is an exception to all rules; its members must bear a special tax of two dollars per capita for the purpose of enforcing State laws, which in all other cases are enforced at public expense. Members of the profession are taxed on their possessions as high as anybody. Why should they have to pay for the prosecution of violators of the law any more than other professions? Are lawyers taxed a special sum to prosecute offenders in their ranks?

There are wicked, vicious and careless men who are willing to make money for themselves by encouraging the use of narcotic drugs and furnishing such things to the unfortunate victims of an acquired appetite—such are criminals—but very few of them are recognized members of the medical profession. The Harrison law, in many respects, is one of the wisest, but why should it penalize every honest doctor and tax him three dollars a year for the privilege of relieving the suffering of his fellow creatures?

The Prohibitory law is a public blessing, but why should it impose such burdens upon physicians who use alcohol only in a proper way? Why should it give such opportunities for selfish immoral men to make money out of the victims of the drink habit? Can anything be more supremely absurd than to give a doctor the privilege of writing one hundred prescriptions in a month and making it criminal if he writes one more? Who can tell how many of his patients will need some form of alcoholic medicine next month? Think of the tyranny of a law which will not allow a druggist to use a little alcohol in a prescription required to effect solution, because the writer, though a regular physician, has not applied for that contemptible permit to write one hundred prescriptions for a pint of booze. Who wants such a permit except the man who is willing to use it in pandering to the degradation of his fellows? Honorable physicians have to avail themselves of this permit, but I dare say every one despises such a law.

Why is the profession so tame and submissive? The unfair and ridiculous laws to which we are subjected would provoke a revolution if applied to any other class or profession."

F. E. COREY, M. D.

BOOK REVIEW

The Evolution of Disease. By Prof. J. Danysz, Chef de Service, Institut Pasteur, Paris. Translated by Francis M. Rackemann, M. D., Philadelphia and New York: Lea & Febiger. 1921.

On the basis of the reactions of the arsenobenzenes with blood serum, an elaborate theory of the "evolution" of disease is built. A critical consideration of the book will be aided by the knowledge that the basic experiments have been repeated by other observers with results, which, to put it mildly, modify any interpretation of the original facts in the case.

Nevertheless, as the author feels that there is a "complete identity of the reactions between serum and arsenobenzene on the one hand, and between serum and the biologic antigens on the other," he proceeds to develop analogies in every field of immunity.

The reader will appreciate his ingenuity, but is apt to feel that "in order to explain these things there has been created a complicated and barbarous terminology which has, incidentally, the great inconvenience of giving grand illusions with a precision which does not exist."

J. O.